

World Habitat Day, Jakarta, 3 October 2005
Address by Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka for the opening ceremony

Executive Director



UN-HABITAT

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Your Excellency Mr. Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia,
Mr. Sutiyoso, the Governor of Jakarta Metropolitan City and President of the Association for Provincial Governments of Indonesia and all Governors present
Mr. Djoko Kirmanto, the Minister of Public Works of the Republic of Indonesia,
Mr. Mohammad Yusuf Asyari, the Minister for the People's Housing of the Republic of Indonesia and all Honorable Ministers
Mr. Ong Keng Yong, the Secretary General of Association of Southeast Asian Nations,
Mrs. Diane Diacon, Director of the Building and Social Housing Foundation of the United Kingdom,
Honourable Mayors,
Distinguished Habitat Award Winners,
Excellencies,

Other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am greatly honoured to join you here today, and I express my sincere gratitude to you Mr. Vice-President and to your Government for so graciously offering to host the global celebration of World Habitat Day in this wonderful city of Jakarta.

However, I stand before you today with a sense of heartfelt sadness and loss. Allow me, Your Excellencies, to open my remarks with a word in memory of the late North Sumatra Governor, Tengku Rizal Nurdin, who so kindly gave of his time to personally show me the devastation caused by the tsunami when I visited your country in May this year. In awarding him posthumously the Habitat Scroll of Honour, our prayers are with his family, as well as all of those who died in last month's tragic air accident.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations designated the first Monday in October each year as World Habitat Day so that we can take stock of the living environment, and reflect on the conditions of the poorest citizens in our towns and cities.

Let me therefore also express my sincere gratitude to those Honourable Ministers, Mayors, and other distinguished guests who have joined us here to show their support for this noble cause. Your presence is an inspiring signal to the many towns and cities around the world also celebrating this occasion. UN-HABITAT also wishes to signal that we will continue to stand by Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, The Maldives, Somalia and other places now rebuilding their communities after the tsunami.

We chose the theme, *The Millennium Development Goals and the City*, for World Habitat Day this year because it is now five years since world leaders agreed in the Millennium Declaration to a set of eight ambitious goals.

These eight goals are aimed at eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, fighting AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and forging a new partnership for development. And it is less than a month now since they reaffirmed this commitment at their five-review summit in New York.

The goals are simple but powerful objectives that every woman, man and young person can understand whether they live in Monrovia or Washington, Oslo or Cape Town, Nairobi, Bogota or right here in Jakarta. Yet we have found, that five years into the new millennium not everyone, especially those living in slums and informal settlements, knows enough about the goals. We know too that by applying them in cities, particularly in the poorest slums and overcrowded informal settlements, their impact will have a positive multiplier effects well beyond the immediate neighbourhood.

UN-HABITAT's research shows that by the year 2050 we will be living in an urban planet with six billion people – or two-thirds of humanity – settled in towns and cities. As these urban centres grow, the locus of global poverty is moving into towns and cities. This urbanization of poverty is clearly one of the major challenges of our time.

For this reason, we have two crucial targets for slum dwellers that fall under Millennium Development Goal No. 7. They are Target 10, to *reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015*, and Target 11, to *achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020*.

Yet we have to work harder than ever to achieve these targets when we consider the enormity of the challenge: Asia still accounts for 60 percent of the global slum population with a total of 554 million slum dwellers in 2001, followed by sub-Saharan Africa, with 187 million slum dwellers constituting 20 percent of the total, and Latin America with 128 million making up 14 percent of the global figure.

An estimated 1 billion people – one in five people in the developing world – still live below the extreme poverty line, and the results of national efforts so far are uneven. Indeed, many governments and local authorities have still to establish their national and local action plans and targets for improving the lives of slum dwellers. They make up more than three-quarters of the people who lack safe water, and half of the people who lack improved sanitation.

There has been headway in reducing hunger, improving access to drinking water and sending more children to primary school. Yet mothers continue to die unnecessarily in childbirth in urban slums throughout the developing world, often within reach of hospitals to which they have no access, and gender equality remains no more than a dream for women in many countries. Damage to the urban environment and its surrounds is a growing threat to city food and water supplies, homes and livelihoods.

This is a scandalous and explosive social time bomb. If no serious action is taken, slums will become a slow motion tsunami. Indeed, if present trends continue, the global slum population is expected to climb to 2 billion people in the next 30 years.

Excellencies,

As the Secretary-General of the United Nations himself is frequently at pains to remind us, we have the means and the resources to reverse this situation. I am greatly encouraged therefore that world leaders at their meeting last month called for increased investment in UN-HABITAT's Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and its Slum Upgrading Facility, and for affordable and better housing and infrastructure. It is a boost to making the eighth goal – the concept of a global partnership between rich and poor countries – a reality in the cause of human settlements. Today we will shortly be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Indonesia to bring the benefits of UN-HABITAT's Slum Upgrading Facility right here into the poorest neighbourhoods.

Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to pay special tribute to this year's Habitat Scroll of Honour award winners. They shine out in their commitment to reducing poverty, developing the urban environment, bringing relief to the tsunami victims and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Let me single out the City of Jakarta and the Governor for being among the winners. The City of Jakarta is a mega city with more than 10 million inhabitants. About 20 per cent or 2 million are living in Kampung. Yesterday I visited two such neighbourhoods. It is clear that much challenge remains ahead but the progress made so far needs to be recognized as we reflect on areas that still need to be improved and strengthen the people's process.

I also wish to congratulate the winners of the World Habitat Award issued by the Building and Social Housing Foundation in the United Kingdom. I thank the Director, Diane Diacon for once again joining me here in Jakarta so that we can join forces to focus the global attention to the plight of the urban poor.

The Millennium Development Goals will be won or lost in urban slums. We must work together and this way, not only will we help the poorest people, but we make our cities more inclusive, safer and cleaner for everyone. It is in the end a win-win situation for all.

Thank you for your attention.